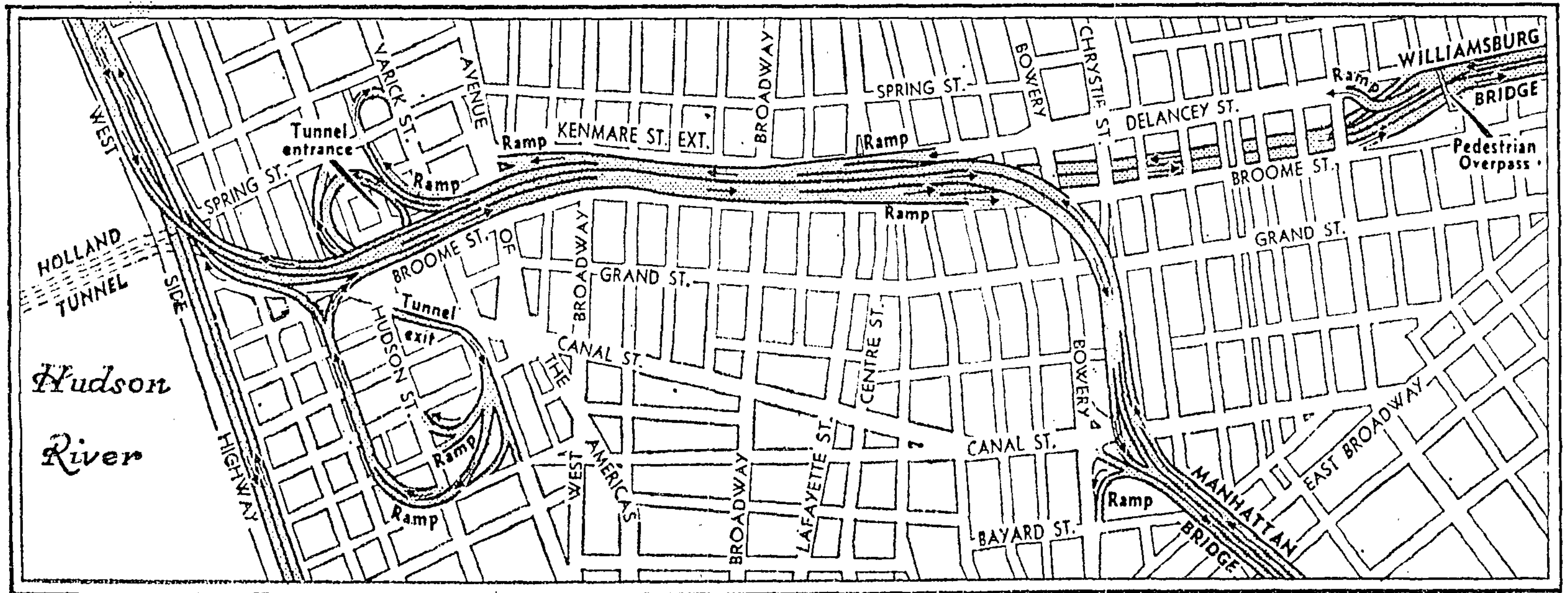


Accord Advances Downtown Expressway



The New York Times

Downtown road link across Manhattan would be elevated except for a depressed approach to Williamsburg Bridge

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By JOSEPH C. INGRAHAM

After fifteen months of horse-trading, city and state officials have reached a compromise on construction of the often-proposed Lower Manhattan Expressway.

As a result, plans for the \$77,919,200 project to link the Holland Tunnel and the Miller (West Side) Highway with the Manhattan and Williamsburg Bridges have been forwarded to the Federal Highway Administration.

Federal approval for the ten-lane expressway, mainly across Canal and Broome Streets, is considered certain. Then the program must be adopted by the

Board of Estimate after a public hearing.

Because the official agencies have ironed out their differences, the only obstacle to starting the project could come from owners of the \$31,000,000 of property that must be acquired for the two-and-a-half-mile highway. The project would be the first elevated vehicular crosstown artery in traffic-clogged Manhattan.

The move to reconcile official problems before seeking Federal sanction was pressed by Madigan-Hyland, consulting engineers for the State Department of Public Works, which will oversee the venture.

The state will pay 10 per cent of the cost and the Federal Government 90 per cent, because the expressway will be incorporated into the national system of interstate and defense highways.

Actual construction costs of the expressway are estimated at \$46,729,000, not including a 4 per cent allowance for preliminary engineering or another 10 per cent for contingencies. Acquiring the right-of-way is budgeted at \$31,190,200, which is the assessed valuation plus 25 per cent. It was considered likely that the final cost would be more than \$85,000,000.

In the path of the proposed

new road are substandard tenements, a few substantial loft buildings and some run-down commercial property. The best-known structure that would be demolished is the antiquated Police Headquarters Annex at 400 Broome Street. Its elimination undoubtedly would be welcomed by Police Commissioner Stephen P. Kennedy, who has been trying in vain to convince city officials of the need for a modern, central administrative headquarters.

With official agencies presenting a united front, which Madigan-Hyland has obtained in writing, it was considered

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probable that the five-year task of constructing the expressway would get under way this spring. The project would be constructed in three stages, with the first demolition to cover the section from the Avenue of the Americas (Sixth Avenue) to the Bowery.

Stage two would embrace the area from West Street to Sixth Avenue, and the final part of the job would be from the Bowery at Broome Street to the Williamsburg and Manhattan Bridges.

The recommended plan shows the elevated steel structure starting at the West Side Highway and following Canal Street for about three blocks. The road then swerves east and crosses the Holland Tunnel Plaza. This westerly part of the project would have direct and loop ramp connections with the West Side Highway, the twin tubes of the Holland Tunnel and with major streets.

East of the plaza the expressway would be on the north side of Watts Street and would continue along the north side of Broome Street. The streets are to be widened, with the elevated expressway in the center. Near Elizabeth Street a spur branches to the Manhattan Bridge.

Links to Bridge Decks

The spur swerves south to cross the intersection of the Bowery and Broome Street, continues southerly along the west side of Chrystie Street and then curves to the bridge, connecting with both decks of the Manhattan span. This would permit reversal of traffic on the upper roadway in addition to normal two-way operation. This part of the project is 1.98 miles.

Near Centre Street the outer lanes of the center part of the expressway descend and pass under Elizabeth Street, continuing easterly to the Williamsburg Bridge in an open-walled cut. The distance from Elizabeth Street to the Williamsburg Bridge is .53 of a mile.

The spur to Williamsburg Bridge would result in closing Mulberry, Mott, Norfolk, Suffolk and Clinton Streets to through traffic. All other streets would be bridged over the depressed expressway. Kenmare Street would be extended from Lafayette Street to Sixth Avenue.

The widening of Broome Street will provide three surface lanes of moving traffic in each direction, plus parking lanes at each curb. Underneath the elevated roadway the plans call for off-street parking for 700 cars.

The expressway is to have a median separator for disabled

vehicles, a requirement for Federal approval.

The Manhattan Bridge connection is designed for six lanes of traffic (three each way), while the other bridge spur provides for four lanes, with a shoulder for disabled cars on the right of each roadbed. By paving the shoulders, the road can be made six lanes wide and the median strip used for disabled vehicles.

River-Front Connection

From Sixth Avenue westbound, two lanes would continue to the West Side Highway for northbound river-front travel. There are to be three lanes westbound leading to ramp approaches to the Holland Tunnel and to the West Side Highway southbound. There also would be a special truck ramp for dual tunnel and local street connection use.

The five lanes of eastbound expressway section would be formed by two lanes from the tunnel, one lane from an access ramp at West and Spring Streets and two lanes from the southbound West Side Highway.

Provision also has been made to divide truck and passenger car traffic, since the West Side Highway is barred to commercial vehicles, except newspaper trucks.

The new expressway would have a capacity of 13,800 vehicles an hour, seven times the amount of traffic that now moves with difficulty across Canal Street.

Even this higher capacity of the new road was approved with "misgivings" by the Traffic Department, which pressed for more lanes to the Williamsburg Bridge. The department contended that studies had shown there soon would be need for greater capacity.

Another change demanded by Hulan E. Jack, Manhattan Borough President, was for improved surface streets parallel to the Williamsburg Bridge to provide better travel between the expressway and the Franklin D. Roosevelt (East River) Drive.

Further Aid Sought

Mr. Jack also has pending a request that the Federal Government broaden its grant to help defray the cost of widening the West Side Highway in the vicinity of Canal Street. The crosstown artery is expected to generate much new traffic from Long Island by way of the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel, which connects with the West Side Highway as well as the East River bridges.

The consultants and City Construction Coordinator Robert Moses, the moving spirit behind the project also asked Mr. Jack to take on the knotty task of convincing the Port of New York Authority to build a third tube to the Holland Tunnel.

The bi-state agency has ob-

jected even to considering that traffic-relief proposal until the long-stalled Narrows Bridge is in operation. The port agency contends that the Brooklyn-Staten Island span will siphon off so much traffic wanting to bypass Manhattan that the present Holland Tunnel will be able to handle the load. Only 37 per cent of the expressway traffic would use the tunnel crossing, studies showed.

Mr. Jack also would like the expressway budget to include provisions for financing reconstruction of the upper ramps of the Manhattan Bridge, because the need for linking the elevated road to the span involves additional work by the city. In the event the planned bridge project cannot be financed with Federal aid, the cut-off point should be moved easterly, Mr. Jack held.

As part of the expressway-Manhattan Bridge hook-up, Grand Street would be widened on the north between the Bowery and Chrystie Street, and the entire block bounded by the Bowery and Christie, Grand and Broome Streets is to be acquired for the highway and surface road improvements.

The recommended plan also calls for several changes in the local street traffic pattern. This would result in a new align-

ment of routes on at least twelve thoroughfares.

In addition to the tunnel, bridge and West Side Highway connections, the expressway will have at least eleven exit and entrance ramps between the Bowery and Varick Street.

There is no ramp connection between the expressway and West Broadway, a decision obviously taken to still objections from Greenwich Village residents who have been fearful that the crosstown artery would have a direct link with West Broadway.

Mr. Moses has made known his intention to widen West Broadway, a north-south artery, to accommodate the new traffic from Washington Square Village, luxury apartments, that received city and Federal subsidy for land acquisition. West Broadway links with Fifth Avenue by way of Washington Square Park, now closed to all but bus and emergency traffic.